

CURIOUS DOMESTIC PETS.

Musical Insects and Waltzing Mice
Very Popular in Japanese
Households.

Among the many curious domestic pets of the Japanese are their musical insects and waltzing mice.

Hung up in the verandas of Japanese houses may be seen small, exquisitely cut bamboo cages, from which in the hush of dawn and at the close of summer days proceed quaint little whistlings, tinklings and trills. Usually it is at evening that the Japanese sit at their ease to listen to the music of their imprisoned insects. One called the "suzu-mushi" gives out, it is said, a kind of trill so delicate and clear as to sound like an etherealized bird's song.

One species of Japanese mouse may be said to waltz through the greater part of the waking hours of its life, never tiring, though its feet wear out in the process. This peculiar little rodent is black and white and has pink eyes. Its chief peculiarity is that at a time when baby mice of other species are just beginning to move about this terpsichorean mouse is already able to waltz.

Put together, these Japanese dancing mice will waltz in couples, and at times more than two will join in a mad whirl. So rapid is the movement of the dancers that it is difficult to distinguish their heads from their tails.

The Japanese says that waltzing seems to be as essential to the happiness of this mouse as midair somersaults are to the tumbling pigeon. An upright peg forms a convenient pivot round which the mouse can whirl, but it is said that without any such guide they would not in several minutes cover an area larger than a dinner plate, and they easily spin under a tumbler.—New York Herald.

AN UNFOUGHT DUEL.

The Way the Father of His Country
Avenged a Blow.

It is narrated that on one occasion in his early manhood Washington came very near the settlement of a dispute, so common in those days, by fighting a duel. But as he was the one who should have issued the challenge he had the still greater courage to apologize and admit that he was in the wrong.

It was in the town of Alexandria, where the young Virginia colonel was quartered with his troops, that an election dispute occurred, and in the heat of the party excitement Washington told a Mr. Payne that he lied. That gentleman at once replied with a blow that knocked the young colonel down. Word having reached the barracks that their beloved commander had been killed, his soldiers rushed to the city to avenge him. He met them, however, quieted them, and they returned to their quarters.

Mr. Payne, on receiving a note from Washington the next morning asking him to call at his lodgings, supposed it was, of course, to give the colonel opportunity to demand "satisfaction" for the blow he had received the day before. Imagine his surprise when, instead of finding pistols or swords ready for a duel, Washington greeted him with outstretched hand, saying: "I believe I was wrong yesterday. You have already had some satisfaction, and if you deem that sufficient here is my hand. Let us be friends."—H. A. Ogden in St. Nicholas.

Catching the Speaker's Eye.

The practice of "catching the speaker's eye" dates back to the session of 1640, when a heated dispute arose between members of the house, several of whom claimed precedence of speech. It was then decided that whoever first caught the speaker's eye should have the right to address the house. This rule worked smoothly until 1688, when Sir John Trevor was elected to the chair. The new speaker was afflicted with an abominable squint; consequently two members would often catch his eye simultaneously and decline to give way to one another. To obviate this a further rule was framed to the effect that the speaker should call by name upon the member privileged to address the house. So every holder of the office has to possess a good memory for names as well as keen eyesight.—London Chronicle.

The Cruel Wolf Spider.

One of the most unnatural things in nature, if the expression is allowable, is the manner in which the young of the common wolf spider treat their mother. After the little creature has laid her eggs she envelops them in a silken covering, so as to make a ball about the size of a pea, and this she carries about with her wherever she goes and will defend it with her life. When the young are hatched they climb on her back, giving her a monstrous appearance, and ride about until nearly half grown, and as soon as they discover their strength they fall to and devour their mother.

His Last Request.

As the doomed man was led to the scaffold the sheriff asked: "Have you any last request to make?" "Yes," said the wretch. "I would like to have a pair of suspenders." So they assigned two hangers to the job instead of one.—Baltimore Sun.

Just Like Henry.

"But why do you cry so, Frau Maier?" "The sight of Vesuvius reminds me so of my poor dear Henry. He, too, was always smoking."—Fliegende Blätter.

BRIGNOLI IN A RAGE.

An Unappreciative Audience and the
Famous Italian Tenor's Sym-
pathetic Servant.

Brignoli, the famous Italian tenor, always expected an encore, no matter where or what he sang, and if it was not forthcoming he was off in a rage instantly. In some small town he sang his favorite song, "Com e Gentil," a serenade from Donizetti's "Don Pasquale," with unusual care and walked off the stage perfectly satisfied, pausing at the wings to listen to the applause. To his utter amazement there was not a sound of approbation. He strode into the dressing room muttering that he would not respond to an encore; he would refuse to sing another song. Still the house remained silent. "No," he cried to those about him; "I refuse to sing again. I refuse to respond to the encore."

Barbagelata, who was more clever than the ordinary servant, humbly approached and said:

"Signor Brignoli, you sang that like an angel. The people could not appreciate it."

The old fellow nearly wept.

"Barbagelata," he exclaimed, "give me your hand. I did not know you were such a musician. Tagliapietra, I must introduce you to Barbagelata, my servant," turning to "Tag," who stood near by. "He is a great musician," went on Brignoli, still in a temper. "He appreciates my singing more than all those fools."

INSTANT DEATH.

It Is Not So Quick but That the Mind
Has Time to Act.

It is questionable if such a phenomenon as instant death is known to the scientist and investigator. Physicians and surgeons tell us that death by gunshot wound is the easiest mode of terminating life; yet, rapid as such a mode of taking off must necessarily be, the body has leisure to feel and time to reflect and on rare occasions even to act.

On the first attempt of one of the adherents of the Spanish monarch to assassinate William, prince of Orange, the ball passed through the bones of his face and brought him to the ground. In the instant which preceded stupefaction, however, he was able to frame the notion that the ceiling of a room had fallen in and crushed him.

Another question in this connection is that of probable pain. Although numerous instances could be cited in support of the view that the mind acts in cases of so called instant death, it by no means follows that the infliction of a fatal blow is attended by the least semblance of pain or a single pang of fear or regret. Unless death results immediately, however, the pain may be as varied as the nature of the injuries.

Winning a Fur Coat.

The artist Hans Canon once painted a Russian prince in a magnificent fur mantle which took his fancy so greatly that he endeavored to hit on a plan by which he might retain possession of it. On sending home the portrait he omitted to return the garment, and to the letter requesting him to do so he made no reply. One day when looking out of a window he saw the prince coming toward his house. Hastily slipping into the garb, Canon sat down in an armchair near the fire. The prince, who had come for his coat, started on seeing Canon groaning and trembling at the fireside. "What is the matter with you?" he asked. "Oh," groaned Canon, "I don't know what it is, but I feel so weak and wretched, and I cannot get warm. Two days ago my brother died of smallpox, and I am a bit nervous about myself." The artist kept the coat.

Diedrich Knickerbocker.

It may be that a Dutchman named Knickerbocker did live in the early history of New York, but if he did there are no records extant to prove it. The truth is, the name was created by Washington Irving, who applied it to all residents of New York in his time who happened to be descended from the early Dutch settlers. Irving used this quaint Dutch character in his "Knickerbocker History of New York" to burlesque the early days of the city. The volume purported to have been the work of Diedrich Knickerbocker and gave an amusing and satirical account of the early Dutch settlers. Records of the period tell us that the book bitterly offended their descendants, who never forgave Irving for his fling at them.—New York Times.

Boiled Oysters.

In "Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne" Swift writes to Stella, "Lord Masham made me go home with him to eat boiled oysters," and then he obligingly adds the recipe: "Take oysters, wash them clean—that is, wash their shells clean; then put your oysters in an earthen pot with their hollow side down; then put this pot, covered, into a great kettle of water and let it boil. Your oysters are then boiled in their own liquor and do not mix with water."

A Leading Question.

"Mr. Wombat?" "What is it, Tommy?" "When you were a little boy and fellers called on your sister, did they ever give you a nickel to go out and play?"—Kansas City Journal.

Changed Color.

Howell—You were the dark horse in the convention, weren't you? Powell—No, I was a blond jackass.—New York Press.

Knowledge is more than equivalent to force.—Johnson.

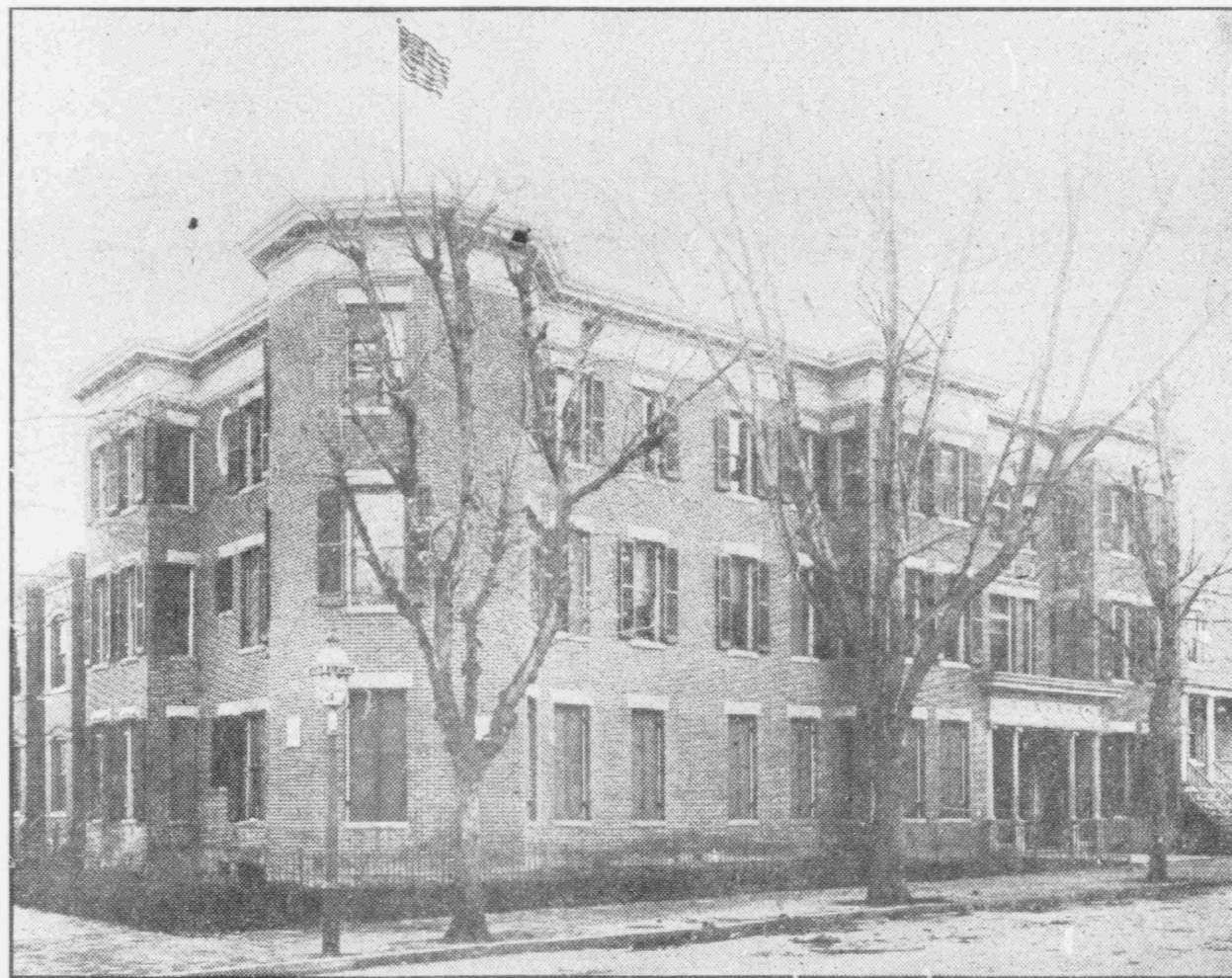
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sponded to, and the guest or guests be driven immediately to the hotel in the hotel's automobile which will meet any train that comes into the Union Station or Steamboat wharf.

The erection of this hotel in the city of magnificent distances will be an honor as well as a benefit to the colored people. Almost any city in the South has a first class hotel and the people in Washington have determined not to be behind in meeting the demands of strangers and visitors.

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